

01/01/2012

TEACHER MOLESTER

ANTONIO VALVERDE - LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

PKG 2:10

The children at Miramonte Elementary School never complained about their third-grade teacher. Not when he blindfolded them, not when he put tape over their mouths or even when he placed live cockroaches on their faces. He told them it was a game. Then he photographed them, creating images that would eventually lead to his arrest. Mark Berndt faced arraignment Wednesday on charges that he committed lewd acts on 23 boys and girls, ages 6 to 10, between 2008 and 2010. He has hired a lawyer and has made no statements to authorities, said Los Angeles County sheriff's spokesman Steve Whitmore. The investigation began when a film processor found Berndt's photos more than a year ago. Since the discovery, the school district fired Berndt and police put him under surveillance.

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01/02/2012

SCHOOLS-TRANS FATS

VO: 21

Colorado is taking aim at junk food in school cafeterias as it considers the nation's toughest school trans-fat ban. A Colorado House committee is expected to hear a bill today to forbid any trans-fat in school food -- not just the food served through regular cafeteria lunches. That would mean vending machines, after-school bake sales and popular "a la carte" items on lunch lines such as ice creams or pizza would have to be produced without artery-clogging trans fats. Several states already limit trans-fat in school cafeterias, but none has a trans-fat ban that extends before and after school. Colorado has the nation's lowest obesity rate, but young people are becoming fatter along with their counterparts in other states.

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01/03/2012

TRANSPLANT OVER IMMIGRATION STATUS

MARÍA EUGENIA PAYAN-MIAMI, FLORIDA

PKG:2:06

Support is pouring in for a California man who was denied a kidney transplant because of his immigration status. Jesus Navarro, an immigrant from Mexico, was on an organ donor list for six years before he received word from UC San Francisco's transplant center that he was next in line. The day of his final consultation, doctors discovered Navarro was an illegal alien and called off surgery. The 35-year-old's wife stepped in and offered her own kidney. She was a match, but doctors still refused to operate. Now, city councilmen, advocacy groups and labor union leaders across the state are reaching out. "It's really troublesome that we've gotten to a point in this country where you allow a person to die because of his so-called legal status," said Oakland City Council President Ignacio De La Fuente, who also is the vice president of Glass, Molders International Union.

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01/06/2012

PASSPORT FEES INCREASES

VO: 24

U.S. citizenship is priceless to some, worthless to others. But now the State Department has a dollar figure: U.S. citizenship is worth \$450. At least that's what it will cost you to renounce it. Under new consular fees published Thursday in the Federal Register, the cost of processing a formal renunciation of U.S. citizenship skyrocketed from \$0 to \$450. The announcement locks in fee hikes that had been proposed in 2010 and instituted on an interim basis. The State Department doesn't say how or why it calculated the cost. Citizenship is free for most Americans who are accorded the privilege at birth. The department says only that it "has decided that the renunciant should pay this fee at the visit during which he or she swears the oath of renunciation." It's also getting more expensive if you want to keep your U.S. citizenship and need a passport to prove it. The application fee for a passport is jumping by 27 percent, from \$55 to \$70 with a 100 percent increase, from \$20 to \$40, in the passport security surcharge.

USA-FOOD/FOODSTAMPS

VO: 32

Stung by election-year criticism of a program used by one in seven Americans, administrators of U.S. food stamp benefits are intensifying efforts to combat fraud and protect the \$75.3 billion plan from the budget axe. Enrollment in the food aid program that helps the poor, elderly and disabled is running at record high levels, with 46.1 million people now participating. High joblessness, persistent woes in the housing market and a tepid economic recovery have driven more than 14 million people to sign up for the benefits since U.S. President Barack Obama took office three years ago.

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02/07/2012

FORECLOSURE SETTLEMENT-STATES

VO:26

More than 40 U.S. states have agreed to a nationwide settlement over foreclosure abuses. The deal would force the five largest mortgage lenders to reduce loans for about 1 million households. And the remaining holdouts could sign onto a deal in the coming days. Officials say that negotiators worked well into Monday night to persuade more states to join the settlement. There is growing optimism that California, Delaware, Nevada, New York and others will eventually sign on. The reduced loans would benefit homeowners who are behind on their payments and owe more than their homes are worth. The lenders Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citigroup and Ally Financial -- would also send checks for about \$2,000 to hundreds of thousands of people who lost homes to foreclosure.

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02/08/2012

HOUSE SPONSOR PULL BILL ON IMMIGRATION TENNESSEE

VO: 21

The sponsor of a bill that would make it a felony to harbor or transport an illegal immigrant has withdrawn the measure from consideration. The bill had been scheduled for a vote in the House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday. Immigrants' rights activists claimed victory for the change. A news release from the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition said members and supporters had asked their legislators to oppose the measure. Bill sponsor Rep. Tony Shipley said their actions had nothing to do with his decision. The Kingsport Republican said his main concern was to prevent human trafficking, and other bills that have been introduced this session already address that issue. Shipley's bill mirrors portions of a controversial Alabama law that is the subject of several lawsuits.

US IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT ADVOCATE

VO: 26

If you're a U.S. citizen picked up by immigration officials, who do you call? There's a new public advocate who's supposed to help. This is the first time U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has designated an agency point person. Andrew Lorenzen-Strait is the new liaison between ICE and folks on the front lines - immigration advocacy groups and people detained by the agency. In particular, ICE says the advocate will address "concerns related to ICE enforcement actions involving U.S. citizens." Lorenzen-Strait is a former pro bono lawyer from Maryland. ICE says information brought back by the advocate will help the agency prioritize the "types of individuals" who should be deported.

SECOND TIME DEPORTED

VO/SOT 1:00

A federal judge Monday sentenced an illegal immigrant to 12 months in prison for buying guns to send back to his native Honduras. Manuel De Jesus Martinez Aguilar was arrested in an undercover operation by federal agents and Posey County law enforcement officials on April 29, 2010. He appeared in U.S. District Court at Evansville on Monday. Chief Judge Richard L. Young also fined him \$200. He could also be deported after serving his sentence. If so, it would be for the second time. Aguilar was deported to Honduras from Houston, Texas, in June 2000, according to court records. At the time of his arrest in Posey County, he was living in Mount Vernon, Ind., using the name Roger Garcia.

STUDY - SPANKING CAUSES LONG-TERM DAMAGE

VO: 15

Spanking your kids could lead to problems later in life. That's coming from an article published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal. Researchers analyzed several studies on the topic and found who were physically punished had more mental health disorders and slower

cognitive development. Researchers say the findings show parents should find constructive ways to discipline their kids.

CDC: BREAD BEATS OUT CHIPS AS BIGGEST SALT SOURCE

VO: 25

Bread and rolls are the No. 1 source of salt in the American diet, accounting for more than twice as much sodium as salty junk food like potato chips. Most of the sodium comes from common restaurant or grocery store items. Some foods that are consumed several times a day, such as bread, add up to a lot of sodium even though each serving is not high in sodium. EnlargeClose
Al Behrman, AP Most of the sodium comes from common restaurant or grocery store items. Some foods that are consumed several times a day, such as bread, add up to a lot of sodium even though each serving is not high in sodium. That surprising finding comes in a government report released Tuesday that includes a list of the top 10 sources of sodium. Salty snacks actually came in at the bottom of the list compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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02/09/2012

STATES MORTGAGE SETTLEMENT - CA, NY ON BOARD

VO: 22

Federal officials say a deal has been reached between states and the nation's biggest mortgage lenders over foreclosure abuses. The Justice Department says the settlement will be announced at a 10 a.m. EST news conference Thursday. The nationwide settlement stems from abuses that occurred after the housing bubble burst. Many companies that process foreclosures failed to verify documents. Some employees signed papers they hadn't read or used fake signatures to speed foreclosures -- an action known as robo-signing. The deal would be the biggest involving a single industry since a 1998 multistate tobacco deal. It would force the five largest mortgage lenders to reduce loans for about 1 million households.

WOMEN AT WAR

VO: 20

Defense officials say the Pentagon is changing its rules to allow women to serve in more jobs closer to the front lines. The changes will allow the rules to catch up a bit with the reality that women have been fighting and dying in Iraq and Afghanistan for a decade. Officials say the new rules are expected to continue the long-held prohibition that prevents women from serving as infantry, armor and special operations forces. But they will allow more women to serve in other roles at the battalion level, which until now had been considered too close to combat.

WA SAME SEX BILL MARRIAGE PASS

VO: 21

The Washington state Legislature has voted to legalize gay marriage, setting the stage for the state to become the seventh in the nation to allow same-sex couples to wed. The action comes a day after a federal appeals court declared California's ban on gay marriage unconstitutional. The Washington state House passed the measure on a 55-43 vote Wednesday. The state Senate approved the proposal last week. Democratic Gov. Chris Gregoire (GREG'-wahr) is expected to sign the bill next week, and it would take effect 90 days later. But opponents have promised a challenge, which could put the law on hold pending the result of a November vote. Same-sex marriage is legal in New York, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Washington D.C.

TOYOTA ADDING 400 JOBS

VO: 21

The toyota plant in princeton says it plans to build more highlanders. today toyota announced it will increase production of the highlander s-u-v in late 20-13. the project in gibson county is expected to create about 400 new jobs at the princeton plant. toyota officials say they will not build onto the plant ... but will modified many of the assembly lines inside. the company also says the new 400 positions will create another three and a half "spin-off" jobs.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

VO: 23

The number of people seeking unemployment aid fell to nearly a four-year low last week, an encouraging sign of continued improvement in the job market. The Labor Department says weekly applications for unemployment

benefits fell 15,000 to a seasonally adjusted 358,000. That's the second-lowest level since April 2008. The four-week average, a less volatile measure, fell to 366,250, the lowest since late April 2008. The figures come a week after the government reported that employers added 243,000

net jobs last month. That pushed the unemployment rate down to 8.3 percent, the lowest in nearly three years.

COFFEE RECALL

VO: 25

Home-brewed coffee lovers, take note: More than a million coffee makers are being recalled after dozens of reports of the brewers spraying hot liquid, coffee grounds or tea leaves onto people. The Consumer Product Safety Commission says there have been 140 reports of problems with the Tassimo single-cup brewers dousing people, including 37 cases involving second-degree burns. In one incident, a 10-year-old girl from Minnesota was hospitalized with second-degree burns to her face and neck. The coffee maker's "T-disc," the plastic disc that holds the coffee or tea, can burst while brewing, according to the commission. It also announced the recall Thursday of some 4 million packages of Tassimo espresso T-discs.

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02/10/2012

MORTGAGE SETTLEMENT-OBAMA

VO: 22

President Barack Obama says a \$25 billion settlement between mortgage lenders and states over foreclosure abuses "will begin to turn the page on an era of recklessness that has left so much damage in its wake." Obama says the landmark deal between the five largest mortgage lenders and 49 states won't heal the housing market by itself. But he said: "This settlement is a start." The Justice Department announced the agreement Thursday. Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citigroup and Ally Financial will pay the multi-billion dollar settlement to reimburse American homeowners and overhaul their industry.

POSTAL SERVICE PLEAS FOR CONGRESSIONAL HELP

VO: 26

The U-S Postal Service is renewing its pleas for help on Capitol Hill... after reporting a net loss of three-point-three billion dollars in the last three months of 20-11. In the last fiscal year-- it lost five-point-one billion dollars. The Postal Service has floated the idea of scaling back to five-day

delivery from the current six-day system to save costs, though this is unpopular with Congress, which has the final authority. Also under consideration is a plan to slow down next-day service.

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02/13/2012

NOTHING TO REPORT

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02/14/2012

OH: SCHOOL PAYS STUDENTS TO GO TO CLASS

Vo: 25

While some local high schools are charging students to take part in extra-curriculars, one is turning that idea on its head. It's paying students to show up. Today was the first day students got paid to come class and principal ramone davenport is pleased with today's turnout. He told me he hasn't seen some of the students who showed up today in weeks. Attendance is up today at Dohn Community High School and it's for a reason you wouldn't expect, cash. So principal davenport started something new. He teamed up with private donors and the Easter Seals to offer an incentive. Seniors who show up five days a week, on time and behave well will get \$25 dollars every Friday. Underclassmen will get \$10 dollars.

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02/15/2012

US TAX PAYROLL

VO: 22

Congressional leaders are gauging lawmakers reactions to a tentative deal extending a 2 percentage-point payroll tax cut and added unemployment benefits for the rest of 2012. Republican and Democratic bargainers worked out the package late Tuesday. The roughly \$150 billion measure also would prevent a steep cut in Medicare reimbursements to doctors. About a third of the measure's costs would be paid for, with savings that include cuts in Medicare payments to hospitals, increased employee contributions to federal pensions and government sales of parts of the broadcast airwaves.

GASOLINE PRICE INCREASE

MARTIN BERLANGA - MIAMI, FLORIDA

PKG: 1:56

Gas prices are off to a fast start in 2012. The national average for a gallon of regular gasoline is up more than 8 percent since the end of 2011, rising from \$3.25 per gallon to \$3.52, according to new data released by the U.S. Energy Information Administration. While gas prices tend to rise through the first half of the year, this is the earliest the average price per gallon has breached the \$3.50 mark. If this pace continues, the national average should hit \$4 a gallon by May, if not sooner. The last time the average price did so in the U.S. was summer 2008, when the price of oil hit \$140 barrel/. Last year gas prices approached \$4, hitting an average of \$3.98 in April, before falling.

"BIONIC ARM" FOR STROKE PATIENTS

CECILIA RAMIREZ HARRIS - MIAMI, FLORIDA

PKG: 1:55

A Navy veteran who lost an arm in Iraq in 2005 now has a new one that can do most of the things the original could. Hospital Corpsman Sharod Edwards, who was a field medic in Iraq, is the first person in the world to have the new functional arm. There were two others who had it on a trial basis, but for Edwards, it's a keeper. It's been three weeks since Edwards got the new arm, which works by muscle impulses higher in the arm that control the action of the wrist and fingers. Licensed certified prosthetist Geoffrey Hemmen, who has worked closely with Edwards at Hanger Prosthetics and Orthotics in San Marco, said he's doing great, and that's why he got into the business. Hemmen said he knew someone when he was a child who lost a leg in an accident and has pursued the field of prosthetics ever since. "They become life-long friends," Hemmen said of those who come through his door. He added he especially likes it when people enter his office in a wheelchair but eventually walk out the door.

=====END OF PART 1 =====